



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

PARTNERS CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF THE WISWALL DAM FISH LADDER



Wiswall Dam before fish passage



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony celebrating project completion



Wiswall fish ladder

May 3, 2012, DURHAM, NH Town of Durham Engineer, David Cedarholm, welcomed partners and onlookers to the ribbon cutting and official opening of the Wiswall Dam fish ladder on the Lamprey River.

The momentous event was the culmination of over two decades of efforts by numerous organizations, including the Lamprey River Advisory Committee, the Town of Durham, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, New Hampshire Fish and Game (NHFG), the Coastal Program of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, the US Fish and Wildlife Society, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS).

Comments were made by several Town of Durham council members, representatives of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee, a representative from Congressman Frank Guinta's office, and Rick Ellsmore, NH NRCS State Conservationist. Accolades went to the Town of Durham's engineering staff and partners' dedication and perseverance to see this important project through to completion. Ellsmore recognized Don Keirstead (NRCS Technical Resource Specialist), Kim McCracken (NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Technology, and Don Richard (NRCS Cartographer) for their contributions. In his congratulatory letter, Congressman Guinta wrote, "It is my sincere hope that as the years pass, native fish species will again flourish in this section of the Lamprey and that your children will experience what nobody has experienced since before the founding of our nation."

According to the NRCS Environmental Assessment, "The Lamprey River is one of the most important fisheries in New Hampshire, and it supports the most important run of migratory fish in Great Bay, providing fish passage at Wiswall Dam will increase overall populations of migratory fish which are experiencing declining populations range□ wide."

NHFG recently provided training to the Town of Durham, who will oversee the operation and monitoring of the ladder. The ladder will be opened based on fish migration patterns, with the average fish migration passage occurring in mid April. Cedarholm estimated that since mid-April, 2012, over 20,000 alewives have used the ladder. In addition, the water body remains a critical source of drinking water for Durham's residents. To the partners, Cedarholm said, "The fish and the Town of Durham thank you." Council member and Durham resident since 1965, Julian Smith commented that this has been "one of the better changes over time", referring to the area.